Pam
Af.-North
Luben
137
JUL 22 1952

AFRICA

WHY?

WHERE?

WHEN?

WHAT?

WITH WHOM?

MISSIONARY RESEARCH LIBRARY NEW YORK CITY

BY BARNERD M. LUBEN

For you who have asked questions

ABOUT AFRICA

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS:

Why are we going to send missionaries to Africa?

The Church has been eager to increase its witness, calling insistently for a new field. Africa has been chosen.

What part of Africa?

The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. This is divided into the North and South Sudan. Our mission will work in the South Sudan.

In what part of the South Sudan will we work?

The southeastern part, between the Nile River and Ethiopia, possibly extending into Ethiopia.

How is it reached?

By train and river boats.

What kinds of people live there?

Primitive Negroes, tall, thin, with kinky hair, wearing little or no clothes and living an agricultural life.

Who governs this part of Africa?

The Sudan is under the joint government of Great Britain and Egypt, the controlling voice being that of Britain.

Does the government allow missionary work in this area?

The South Sudan was opened to missionary endeavor at the turn of the century. Nowhere is government more favorable to Protestant missions than in the South Sudan.

What is the religion of the Sudanese?

North Sudan is Moslem; the South Sudan is primitive pagan with a few Moslems.

Do the Sudanese all speak the same language?

By no means! Nearly every tribe has its own. In the whole of Africa there are over 500 languages plus more than 300 dialects.

What is the official language?

Until some years ago it was Arabic. The government then reversed its policy and made English the official language of the South Sudan.

Does this affect mission work in any way?

Heretofore government clerks and assistants as well as soldiers had all been taken from the Moslem North Sudan. Now these are drawn from the local tribes as fast as they can be trained. This does away with all Arabic and Moslem influence in government in the pagan Sudan.

Does the government assist the missions in the South Sudan?

The government subsidizes mission schools and establishes no schools in areas where the mission schools are at work.

This is one of the greatest challenges to Chris-

tian missions ever given by any government. It is something of an ideal situation to be able to control the education of youth, prepare leaders under Christian influence, send Christian young men into administrative posts in the districts where there is no missionary and secure financial aid from the government in doing all this.

What missions are already at work in the Sudan?

The Church Missionary Society, of the Church of England; the Sudan United Mission, an undenominational society; and the American Mission of the United Presbyterians. Their fields are separate and in no case does the work overlap. There has always been close cooperation among them. The hope is to establish one Church of Christ in the Sudan.

Is the need such that we should choose this part of the world as our new field?

Yes, indeed. The area of the Sudan is almost one million square miles, with a population of about 6,500,000. The missionary societies already at work find their personnel and financial resources far too small to occupy this area in any adequate fashion. Large areas and entire tribes are without the gospel.

Will we enter the Sudan in cooperation with any of the missions already there?

We are planning our work in Africa in the closest kind of cooperation and in constant consultation with the United Presbyterians to strengthen their hand. Our missionaries will be members of the American Mission, work in the

areas of this mission and labor together in the building of the same indigenous (national) church.

Will this sharing tend to lessen our responsibility as a denomination?

The need, the opportunities and the urgency are such that we should have a keen sense of responsibility and rejoice that we can thus join forces with an evangelical mission in taking the Good News to the interior of Africa. Also, it is hoped that within the field of cooperation we can have some specific project for which we shall be responsible.

What is our approach?

We hope to send to Africa a group of missionaries of various skills — evangelistic, medical, agricultural, educational — in an effort to win the tribe to Christ.

Is this the regular procedure in most fields?

No, this is exceptional. Ordinarily such a well-rounded effort is not concentrated on such a small area. Rather than establish stations in various tribes, we plan to use all resources in the evangelization of one tribe, with the hope that after some 15-20 years we will be able to move on with the bulk of the missionary force to another tribe.

With what tribe will this work be initiated?

Probably among the Anuaks.

What is the climate of this area?

From February to April the temperature re-

mains well over a hundred in the daytime, with high humidity. A temperature drop in the evening makes the nights more tolerable. During the long dry season there is no rain at all; from May to October is the season of heavy and almost constant rainfall.

Is this a healthful place for white people?

No, it is not. Though there is no sleeping sickness and very little leprosy, malaria is bad, and precaution must constantly be taken against trachoma, yaws and other diseases. The term of service for missionaries between furloughs is about 4½ years.

Is there much wild life in this country?

This country is the home of an abundance of animal life — elephants, buffalo, giraffe, lions, leopards, hyenas, wildcats, cheetahs, antelopes, waterbuck, gazelles—an unnumbered variety of snakes ranging up to 20 feet in length—a myriad of birds, many of great beauty, and the rivers full of hippopotami and crocodiles, huge water lizards and countless fish, some weighing more than 200 pounds.

Is there any danger from the wild animals?

Nationals are frequently hurt or killed by leopards, lions, crocodiles, hippopotami and other beasts. An equally great danger comes from vipers, scorpions and poisonous snakes. Great care must constantly be exercised.

In what type of homes will the missionaries live?

In glorified native huts, with adobe or brick walls and thatched roofs.

Can you tell something of the history of these people?

Theirs has been a tragic and sad one. Before the British came in, they died fast through intertribal warfare, famine and disease. Their greatest suffering, however, came from the Arab slave traders. These slavers have written one of the cruelest and most heartless chapters in the history of the Sudanese. Down through the years whole areas have been depopulated by these men who ruthlessly seized the able bodied and murdered the rest.

Can you tell more about their primitive pagan condition and what they believe in?

They are hedged about at every turn by taboos and superstitious practices. All life is prescribed, restricted. There is the ever-watchful, malevolent evil eye, greatly feared and against which they must constantly guard themselves. Offerings must be made to spirits, both good and bad, to insure safety. The witch doctor has the greatest influence in the lives of the people, with power of life and death. The people live in the deepest ignorance and the most degrading kind of superstition. Even their language must first be reduced to writing before the missionary can give them the written Word.

Do these tribes people have the mental and moral capacity to progress to something better?

Given the opportunity and the Christian faith, they are capable of rising to a place of equality with any people.

When did the Presbyterians first go to this area?

In 1903. The first convert was baptized ten years later. Now there are well established congregations, made up of clean living, God fearing, consecrated Christian folk.

When do we plan to send our missionaries to Africa?

It is hoped that we may recruit them during 1946 and 1947, give them a year of special training, have them associated with the United Presbyterians on the field for a sufficient period to acquaint themselves with the work and problems of interior Africa, and then by 1948 have them begin their work among the Anuaks.

Has anyone yet volunteered for missionary service in Africa?

Yes, Miss Wilma Kats, a school teacher, has been accepted by both our Board and the United Presbyterian. She will prepare by spending a year at the rural missions course at Cornell University. Also, Rev. and Mrs. J. Robert Swart have been appointed to Africa. Mr. Swart is from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and Mrs. Swart, the former Morrell Webber, is from Flushing, New York. They will study at Cornell during 1946-47. Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Hoekstra were appointed for this work in February, 1947. They will have a year of specialized training before sailing to the field.

Do we need other missionaries?

Yes, the needs at present are (1) A medical missionary family, (2) at least one nurse, and (3) an educational family. Later the Reformed

Church hopes to send another ordained minister, an additional educational missionary, an additional nurse and an additional woman teacher.

Is this missionary endeavor a strategic move?

The Sudan has been called the battleground of the Crescent and the Cross. If Christians don't win these tribes to Christ, and that quickly, the Moslems will win them to Mohammed. It is providential that while we strengthen the Arabian Mission in the stronghold of the false prophet, God is leading us to throw a portion of our resources in men and money into the Sudan to help stem the tide of advancing Mohammedanism.

Board of Foreign Missions
Reformed Church in America
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.

5M-5-47